

CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS: CONTINUING CONVERSATION EXCHANGES

TAKING DISASTER PLANNING TO THE NEXT LEVEL: TABLE TOP EXERCISE

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Tabletop Exercise

Thursday night, 7:30 p.m.

It is the last week of May and 25 students and a staff of 5 are inside the Cultural Center and Museum complex. In addition, there are 45 people attending the Donors reception and opening for the new exhibit. A storm with gale-force winds and heavy rainfall has intensified in the last hour. Several staff have been discussing whether or not to close the Center early (normally open until 9:00 p.m.), but are worried about sending everyone out into the bad weather. There are reports that a river next to the Center is rising.

The Cultural Center and Museum has two stories and a basement; no fire sprinklers but has fire detection and an elevator. The Museum, reception and meeting room are on the first floor; the Research Library is on the second floor. The basement houses collection storage for both the Museum and Library. All staff are working on the 1st floor. The donors are in the Meeting Room on the 1st floor.

Discuss the issues around closing the Center early and sending people out into the storm.

EXERCISING THE PLAN & TRAINING YOUR STAFF

The goal of exercising your plan and training staff is to develop a cohesive team and maintain a current and up-to-date disaster preparedness plan. A plan is not effective if it sits on the shelf and gathers dust.

Exercising the plan and training staff will improve readiness in responding to disaster and provides essential insight into:

- Planning weaknesses
- Resource gaps
- Improve coordination
- Clarify roles & responsibilities
- Improve individual performance & confidence
- Cohesive emergency management team
- Provides input to revise & update plan

Tabletop Exercise (Discussion)

A tabletop exercise helps to identify gaps in a plan. Involves emergency management team; the group is presented with a series of question-problems relating to a disaster.

- Discussion & actions based on a described disaster situation
- Practice coordinated problem solving for emergency situations
- Messages may be given to individual players
- Permits breaks between messages to discuss proper response
- Ongoing discussion & critique of appropriateness of actions taken & decisions made
- Participants practice a coordinated effective response
- Provides input to revise & update plan
- Prepares for Functional Exercise

Functional Exercise (Hands-on)

A functional exercise tests institutional response to a disaster scenario and focuses on a particular aspect of the plan, building area, or collection salvage. A fire drill is an example of a functional exercise. Involves emergency management team and relevant personnel; the group is presented with a hands-on training exercise relating to a disaster. A functional exercise breaks the plan up into manageable training opportunities.

- Train staff in prevention & safety
- Teach collection salvage techniques for priority collections
- Develop understanding of plan and implementation at every level of institution
- Provides input to revise and update plan

CONDUCTING EMERGENCY EXERCISES

<p style="text-align: center;">Exercise</p> <p>What type of exercise do you want to conduct?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire extinguisher training exercise • Collections/salvage response • Site wide, include evacuation
<p style="text-align: center;">Who?</p> <p>Who should be involved from your organization?</p> <p>External participation: if yes, who?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections group • Security • Facilities • Staff • Public agencies
<p style="text-align: center;">Where?</p> <p>Where on your site should you conduct the exercise?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library/Archives/Museum • Collection storage • Staff building(s) • Loading dock
<p style="text-align: center;">When?</p> <p>When should you conduct the exercise? Month? Day?</p> <p>Time of day?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual • Non-public hours • Before noon
<p style="text-align: center;">How?</p> <p>How should you conduct the exercise?</p> <p>Small or large scale?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned training • Surprise exercise • Frequency
<p style="text-align: center;">Why?</p> <p>Why should the exercise be conducted?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandated • Build confidence • Enhance response